

SP 293

Members of the Select Committee on Children --

My name is Jane Servadio. I am the CT State Representative of the American Adoption Congress, a member of the CT Council on Adoption and the birthmother of a 48 year old daughter who was surrendered for adoption in 1962.

Some of you may not know that before 1975 adult adoptees had access to their original birth certificates, as did all other CT born adults. Several legislative changes eliminated that right along with access to genetic and medical history. All states except Kansas and Alaska have closed access to OBC's at one time or another. Recently 8 states have been reopened and access bills are currently being decided in several others. In all states where access has been reinstated the number of abortions has decreased and the number of adoptions has increased. Opponents claim that birthmothers don't want to be found. A survey of all agencies in the country who do searches reports that more than 93% of birthmothers are happy to be found. The charge by religious institutions that access will increase the number of abortions because birthmothers do not wish to be found by the adoptee in the future is also false. Statistics from the Guttmacher Institute and Planned Parenthood show that a large number of women stated that adoption was not an option because they could not emotionally cope with the guilt of having their child out in the world and not knowing where he is or who is caring for him. They felt that abortion would be less difficult to cope with. Both organizations agree that fear of a possible lack of confidentiality of adoption records or of the possibility that their child would search them out in the future has never been mentioned by any of their clients or survey respondents.

The current trend in adoption all over the country is to eliminate secrecy because of the problems it has caused for adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents. Prospective birthmothers now meet prospective adoptive couples and chose the family they feel would be best to raise their child. Together they decide the level of contact that works best for them. The child will always know the birthmother and know that she loves him, thus easing the sense of alienation and abandonment that adoptees grow up with in the best of adoptive families. These are the feelings that drive adoptees to search for their birth families later in life. The reality is that the adoptee has two sets of parents and knowing his ancestry is fundamental to establishing his sense of identity.

Although this bill has been raised by the Select Committee on Children, it has nothing to do with children -- all parties involved are adults. Adoptees are the only people in the country who are unable to have their true birth certificates. There is no reason for this situation to continue and we're hoping that the Legislature will agree.

Thank you,

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